

Fresh Tomato Sauce

sauces 2-3 lbs. pasta

This sauce is pure essence of summer. It is light, thin, sweet, and fragrant. Those hot days of August are really worth it with rewards like this.

1/4 c. extra virgin olive oil, fruity
2 c. onion, 1/2" dice
1 sweet red pepper, 1/4" dice
2 cloves garlic, minced or pressed
3 lbs. fresh tomato, 1/2" dice
juice, skin, seeds, and pulp

1 tsp. balsamic vinegar
1 tsp. salt
1/2 tsp. fresh ground black pepper
4 T. minced fresh basil leaves

The secret of this sauce is to use the best quality, freshest ingredients available. Choose a freshly picked, sweet onion and a fresh, crisp red pepper. The tomatoes want to be the juiciest, most flavorful tomatoes you can find; heirlooms are great. Don't use plum tomatoes for this sauce. Use your best quality olive oil and balsamic vinegar.

Heat the oil in a 4-6 qt. pot on medium high heat. When hot, add the onion and saute' for 5 minutes. Add the pepper and garlic and saute' for another 5-8 minutes, until the onions are translucent. Add the tomatoes, vinegar, salt and pepper and stir well. Add half the basil. Cook on medium high heat for 15-20 minutes, then turn the heat to low. Simmer until the sauce evaporates some of the thin juice from the tomatoes and thickens just a little bit, about 45 minutes, stirring occasionally at first then more often as it thickens.

This sauce is particularly good over fresh pasta; linguine or tagliatelle are my favorites. A good quality imported linguine is also fine. Pass the pepper mill and freshly ground parmesan at the table. Add a crusty bread to sop up the extra sauce on your plate, a salad with fresh greens, and enjoy a taste of summery heaven. In the unlikely event that you have extra sauce, it freezes well.